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## Trial a New Learning Technique in Interior Design Education; The Abstraction of Furniture Components by Using Body Language and Sounds

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### Abstract

The information, which is very rapidly produced in 21st century, has lead to innovations in many areas, in line with the requirements brought by the Age we live in. With the changing student profile, education, an area where such innovations are seen, has started to develop different teaching and learning processes, through which the information can be taught in a short period of time and the long permanence of the information can be provided, instead of the classical approach. These innovations in the interior architecture education, are also applied in order to ensure the permanence of the theoretical courses like History of Furniture, which are easily forgotten. The furniture styles taught within the scope of the course, History of Furniture, is a theoretical subject intensively requiring knowledge. One of the most important elements composing the furniture styles are the furniture components (foot, leg, backrest) and these components are very important when distinguishing between furniture styles.

With this study, a teaching technique implemented within the scope of the course History of Furniture, given to the juniors of the Department of Interior Architecture at KTÜ (Karadeniz Technical University) was tested. In this course, the periods from the ancient age up to today, were given to the students, using the classical method. While conveying the furniture styles, some of the most important furniture components were given using body language and abstraction with sound.

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## 1. Introduction

Interior architecture is one of the occupations that is constantly renewing themselves and exposed to rapid change in line with living standards changing and developing every day. It is important to develop self-renewing learning techniques in order to educate prospective interior architects that have the qualities to meet this ever-changing process and to meet the ever-changing student profile.

In interior architecture education, during the training of theoretical courses a common teaching-learning process has been experienced for ages. In this process, students receive training based on memorization and as a result, some faults in the processes of the effective transfer of knowledge and to maintain the sustainability and effective stages of the troubles have been experienced.

In the scope of this study, the abstraction technique is applied in order to transfer the theoretical knowledge more effectively and efficiently to the students, and to receive a long-lasting return by using body language, and then by repeating these techniques on student, the permanence of knowledge learned has been examined.

## 2. Interior Design Education

Nowadays, traditional learning techniques that have been lasting from past to present have been changed in order to train qualified students for increasing the impact of internal architecture or some revisions have been made to make these traditional techniques more effective. As well as these new techniques that were developed in order to increase the designing power of the student and to help them thinking different from they see, different learning techniques are needed in order to provide the permanence of the theoretical courses that help them design a different design thinking to help increase strength and new techniques developed, as well as theoretical courses to help them to build their design on solid basis.

There are many courses whose theoretical aspects are dominant in interior architecture education. One of these courses is Furniture History Course and it has an intensive knowledge and capacity. The information learned in this course (the legs, backboards and furniture styles that make up furniture components) should be fully understood by the student, it should be analyzed well. In addition, this information has the quality that will build a base and will contribute to the future work experiences. However, the information given through traditional method intensively is unlikely to be permanent. In this context, the learning techniques that will make the learning in education more effective should be implemented.

Generally there is an understanding of classical education applied in many different areas and formed by teachers (explainer) and learners (listener). To what extend the classical models of teaching and learning is effective in interior architectural education is an argumentative subject. It is seen that practical method including vision, perception and comprehension concepts is more effective compared to the classical method based on oral expression and listening for the students taking interior architecture education. It is possible to encounter lots of different experimental studies conducted on this. (Tavşan and Sönmez, 2010).

### 2.1. Abstraction in Interior Architecture Education

The transmission way of classical knowledge in interior architecture education is important in view of providing the permanence on the students. The additional techniques should be applied in order to create awareness in the perception of the students in terms of knowledge taught. To learn the knowledge, the adaptation of the information to life is necessary. So by prompting the students to think on the knowledge learned, the information is provided to be more permanent. Abstraction that is one of these techniques that enables this persistence is defined as an indispensable ring between perception and thought, or rather the most basic common feature of perception and thinking (Arnheim, 2007). In the interior architecture education, the environment is the source of information. In the perception of this information source, observation is an important element. The

students should focus on the information and reach a conclusion by dissociating them from each other for the permanence of the information taught through the observation. In this sense, the abstraction technique enables the persistence by receiving the information learnt through observation into memory in parallel with the experiences.

## *2.2. Drama and Body Language in Interior Architecture Education*

Drama activities used in education provide people to recognize themselves and explore their creative aspect. For example, in the studies it was detected that the individuals who experience this training can express their creative aspect it verbal or nonverbal, they developed their body language and or written expression forms, oral transmission power were developed through drama activities in education. In teaching, learning through behaving and experiencing and using the sense as much as possible is known to be an important principle. Creative drama can be applied to many disciplines in the education string as a method. That the educational purpose of the drama is better understanding a concept, any course and text, internalizing as an individual or as a group, manifesting internal experiences by being revised and discussed on is a common viewpoint. (Orta, 2009). Using drama and body language in all the education fields and courses breaks the boring patterns of the education and this can make it integrated with contemporary education system and can create an excitement among the students.

To dramatize the information by using body language consciously and effectively plays an important role in attracting the attention of the students in education and training process and concretizing the abstract expressions (Çalışkan and Yeşil, 2005). With this technique, a communication can be set up with the other person through gestures and facial expressions and the thing desired to be expressed can be transferred to the other party. Thus, thanks to thoughts and feelings can be supported through gestures and facial expressions and they are concretized. While performing this operation, it is made use of many mimic gestures such as theatrical costume, schematic and technical-code. The schematic gesture, one of these gesture techniques, is a technique that helps students to transform theoretical knowledge into practice. With the help of schematic gestures, the narrator aims to express the most prominent feature of an object or a situation. These gestures that are used in teaching process are the expression methods for drawing attention, providing motivation, and taking part in group activities (Baltaş and Baltaş, 2001).

## **3. Studies**

It is thought that in the theoretical courses given to students studying interior architecture, if the information taught by using classical method is taught by using different techniques, it will be more effective in learning process. Being learnt of the information by the students through experiencing one by one is important in view of increase the permanence of knowledge. With this study, the impacts of theoretical knowledge accompanied by classical method and different techniques were investigated. The study was carried out in the scope of the course "The History of Furniture" taken by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade students of Interior Architecture Department of KTU in 2012-2013 Academic Year Fall Semester. Methods and techniques used in this study is educational approaches carried out by the executive since 2009 that has been implemented from the antiquity to the present day in the scope of the course 'History of Furniture'.

### *3.1. Course Method of Operation*

The learning technique in this study is a different state transferred of the application part of this method that has been tested since 2009 by using a different technique. In previous years, it was applied by the trainer in the form of transfer the most prominent furniture components (Tavşan and Sönmez, 2012). This season's method has been

aimed to increase the speed of students' learning, memory retention, and the participation of the students to the course. This method consists of three steps. Step 1: Presentation, Step 2: Application and Step 3: Assessment (Figure 1).

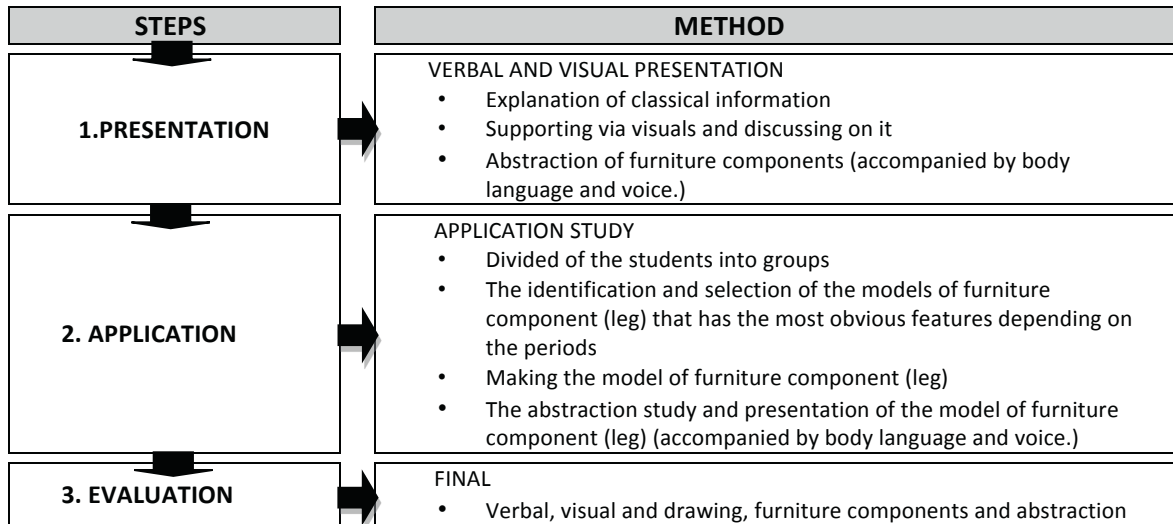


Figure 1. The study in the course of Furniture History

Step 1: Furniture history and styles are transferred to the students by the trainers via oral and visual presentations. The classical information is explained by being supported through visuals and discussions. These expressions is the presentation of furniture components that is the most effective in distinguishing furniture styles through body language technique, schematic and voice gestures (Figure 2).



Figure 2 . The transfer of Melon leg in Tudor style and the legs in Jacobean style of the Renaissance period via body language and sounds

Step 2: The students were divided into groups of 3 and 4 people during the implementation phase of this study. The legs were determined as the most obvious feature based on the periods. Each group has chosen a furniture leg. The model of selected furniture leg in height of 30cm was made of different techniques and materials. As a group, it was asked for being transferred of these furniture legs to the other students with body language and voice. The groups were asked for making an interactive presentation by abstracting the furniture legs using

body language and voice (Figure 3). These studies were recorded audio and video. The application works were considered as a study during the semester.



Figure 3. Sample application works of student presentations

Step 3: To measure the quality of the study, the final exam consisted of verbal and visual questions. In verbal questions, it was asked to explain motif, furniture and furniture components that are distinguishing features of the periods supported by drawings and abstractions. In the visual questions furniture components and furniture styles from different eras committed in this course were asked.

#### 4. Evaluation

It was aimed to examine how much effective the theoretical knowledge transferred by using different learning techniques is. For this purpose, the number of the answers of the students to the questions about furniture components in the period of 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 were evaluated. In 2011-2012 academic year totally 47 students; and in 2012-2013 academic year, totally 52 students entered the exam (Table 1). In order to obtain accurate data in the evaluation, the same quality and the same number of furniture questions that had been asked were asked in also 2012. A total of 15 pieces of furniture components that belong to different periods and styles were asked. By being given of furniture component names, they were asked to describe with drawings.

As a result of the evaluation carried out, it was identified the number of correct answers given by the students to the question of furniture components depending on the years were identified and averaged. With the method used in 2011-2012, the average number of correct answers was 5.28, this value increased to 8.21 in 2012-2013. (Figure 4).

Table 1. Correct answers of questions given to Furniture components depending on the number of students

Years	Correct Answers																Number of Students	Average
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
2011-2012	12	4	1	2	3	3	0	4	3	5	3	5	0	1	1	0	47	5,28
2012-2013	3	0	0	2	4	5	1	2	6	7	9	5	4	2	0	2	52	8,21

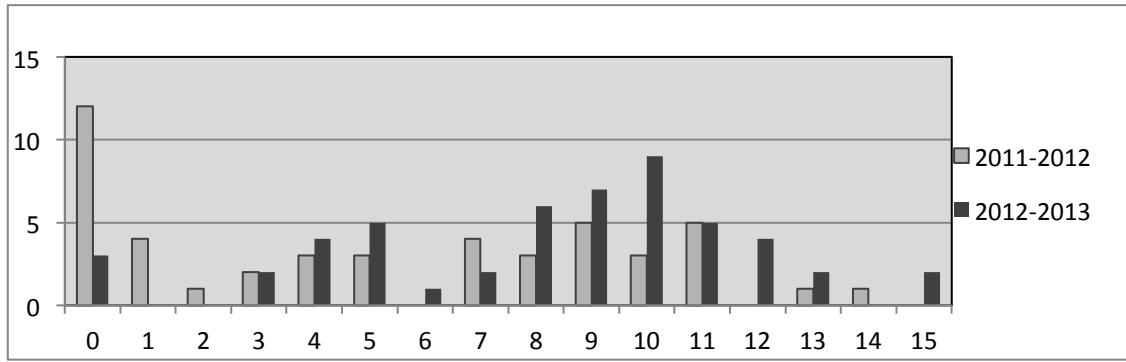


Figure 4. The graph of the correct answers given to furniture components

## 5. Results

At the end of the study, it was found that the permanence of theoretical knowledge such as furniture history is more successful when body language and abstraction techniques were used.

With this new application method it has been seen that;

- The number of correct answers given to furniture components increased compared to the previous years,
- The furniture components that have an important role in the identification of furniture styles have been learnt more easily,
- The information about furniture components is strengthened with the application by using body language and the sounds.
- The speed of learning and memory time increased and the student moves away a little bit from memorization, The participation of the students to the lessons increased and course concentration is provided through interactive presentations,
- Verbal expression has been presented in a fun way.

The number of the correct answer to the question has increased this year compared to the previous years and this affected the final score. That this technique increased the success of exam results is clearly seen. It is becoming a permanent method with the qualities of the revival of furniture components, being expressed in terms of body language and being supported of the internal architecture education is becoming a permanent method.

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